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National Weather Service Honors Central Nebraska Public Power and Irrigation District's Kingsley Dam - with an Honored Institution Award for 75 Years of Outstanding Service to the Volunteer Cooperative Weather Observer Program

Recognizing more than 75 years of dedication, NOAA's National Weather Service has named Central Nebraska Public Power and Irrigation District's Kingsley Dam, as the recipient of an Honored Institution Award. This award is being given in grateful recognition of over 75 years of Cooperative Weather Observations with the National Weather Service.

"Cooperative observers play a critical role in the weather industry," said Ryan Knutsvig, Meteorologist-in-Charge of NOAA's North Platte National Weather Service office. "The weather enterprise is grateful for the volumes of weather data provided by volunteer observers. Their work has led to improvements in weather warnings and forecasts, in addition to a better understanding of the earth's climate. We cannot thank CNPPID and the staff at Kingsley Dam, for giving so many years of service to America."

Ryan Knutsvig, Meteorologist-in-Charge of the North Platte office, will present the award at 800 a.m. Thursday, August 22nd, during a ceremony at the Hilltop offices of CNPPID, above Kingsley Dam. Observing Program Leader Steve Carmel coordinated the awards presentation.

The National Weather Service's Cooperative Weather Observer Program is a unique partnership between the National Weather Service and citizen volunteers in every U.S. state and territory. The cooperative observer program has given scientists and researchers continuous weather data since the program's inception in 1890. Today, more than 11,000 volunteer observers participate in the nationwide program to provide daily reports on temperature, precipitation and other weather factors such as snow depth, river levels and soil temperature.

The observing site at Kingsley Dam began on August 1, 1938. This location has reported daily precipitation data, including snowfall and snow depth to the National Weather Service North Platte office. Other information provided in the past included evaporation pan readings. Site reports have provided important data to NOAA forecasters and hydrologists, and climate scientists.

Long and continuous records provide an accurate picture of a locale's normal weather, and give climatologists and others a basis for predicting future trends. These data are invaluable for scientists studying floods, droughts and heat and cold waves. At the end of each month, observers mail or electronically disseminate their data, to the National Climatic Data Center for publication in "Climatological Data" or "Hourly Precipitation Data."

The first extensive network of cooperative stations was set up in the 1890s as a result of an 1890 act of Congress that established the U.S. Weather Bureau. Many of the stations have even longer histories. John Campanius Holm's weather records, taken without benefit of instruments in 1644 and 1645, are the earliest known recorded observations in the United States.

Many historic figures have maintained weather records, including Benjamin Franklin, George Washington and Thomas Jefferson. Jefferson maintained an almost unbroken record of weather observations between 1776 and 1816, and Washington took weather observations just a few days before he died. The Jefferson and Holm awards are named for these weather observation pioneers.

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On the Web:

NOAA's National Weather Service, North Platte: <http://www.weather.gov/lbf>